

# Société historique du Canada

## Connecting Canadianists: H-Canada and Scholarly Discussion on the Internet

Thanks to H-Canada, over 600 scholars throughout Canada, the United States and the rest of the world meet daily to share ideas about the teaching, researching and writing of Canadian history. As part of H-Net, an international network serving more than 30,000 individuals who subscribe to over 50 Internet discussion lists devoted to history, H-Canada allows for a timely exchange of information and debate among historians, graduate students, archivists, librarians, researchers and others with a scholarly interest in the history of Canada.

### *I H-Canada Subscribers*

H-Canada has grown steadily since its inauguration in February 1995; after one month it counted 200 members; by October 1995 it had grown to 300 subscribers, increasing to 450 by December 1995. As of 30 September 1996, membership to H-Canada was 640. Part of the success of H-Canada is attributable to its ability to remove or lessen barriers which hinder frequent and opportune communication between serious scholars and other professionals. Certainly H-Canada has breached the barriers of distance and time, allowing for almost immediate interaction across geographic and political boundaries. One-third of H-Canada's membership resides outside of Canada. How many of those with non-Canadian addresses are Canadian is not known, but with one-quarter of subscribers in the USA and almost another one-tenth in other parts of the world (Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, Australia and Africa) it is safe to say that studying the history of Canada is an international affair. Within Canada, Ontario subscribers account for 45% of the membership, while those in the Prairies represent about 20%. Quebec and British Columbia constitute about 15% each and the Maritimes about 5%.

H-Canada has managed to lower the gender barrier sometimes associated with the Internet activities. One-third of H-Canada subscribers are female; this does not reflect the general population but is proportionately representative (if not over representative) of the percentage of female history graduate students and faculty members. Despite its efforts (5 of the 11 H-Canada board members are francophones), H-Canada has been less successful in overcoming the language hurdle as francophones (one in ten) and Quebec residents (one in seven) remain under-represented as H-Canada subscribers.

H-Canada has been much more effective in bringing together professionals, professionals-in-training and others with an interest in Canadian history. H-Canada subscribers include: graduate students (4 of 10 H-Canada subscribers); professors,

lecturers, course instructors, post-doctoral fellows and research associates (4 of 10); and archivists, librarians, writers, administrators, researchers, historians and high school teachers (2 of 10). As well, H-Canada allows those isolated by institutional size and distance from large urban centres to take part in discussions that they would otherwise not be able to enjoy unless they were fortunate enough to attend annual scholarly get-togethers. In short, H-Canada acts as an efficient electronic conduit for those with like, complementary and dissimilar points of view and for those who are not part of the scholarly and professional mainstream.

### *II Dissemination, Discussion and Debate*

Since February 1995, H-Canada subscribers have seen over 1500 messages appear on their computer screens. The number of messages per day fluctuates from day to day and month to month but on average H-Canada members deal with 2 to 3 daily messages (The heaviest traffic occurred in October 1995 with a mean of 4.6 messages per day and in February 1996 with a mean 4.4 messages per day). At the simplest level, H-Canada has been a useful and efficient tool in the daily dissemination of up-to-the-minute information. Unfortunately H-Canada has been less effective in fostering dialogue in French: fewer than 10% of the postings have been bilingual (French and English) or French only (the one exception was in December 1995 when nearly 25% of the messages were in French - the result of a useful interchange concerning Canadian history textbooks written in French).

Two out of three messages posted on H-Canada are informational. These include information about: professional activities (conferences, call for papers, job postings, scholarships and fellowships); research (archival holdings, bibliographies, documents, workshops and research tools); new publications (journal tables of content, book reviews and exhibits); and teaching (course outlines, textbooks and multimedia sources). But more than acting as a bulletin board, H-Canada also provides a forum for discussion and debate. In the past year, members considered issues concerning research and scholarship (e.g. the influence of evangelisation on nineteenth-century English Canada and the impact of Native North American diseases on Europeans during the contact period), teaching (e.g. the merit of books on English-Canadian culture available in French and the calibre of texts on Canadian-American relations); and the practice of history (e.g. the closing of archival holdings, the Code of Conduct for researchers and the role of public history).

### *III The Future of H-Canada*

The steady growth of H-Canada in the last eighteen months suggests that it is becoming a useful, if not indispensable, tool for Canadianists. Conference organizers, publishers, archivists, researchers, graduate students, department heads, librarians, professors, sessional instructors, teachers and others look to H-Canada to inform and to be informed. With the rapid changes in computer technology it is not clear in what form H-Canada will take a decade from now, but in the near future it is clear that its continued success depends on remaining a place on the superhighway where those with serious scholarly intentions can disseminate and receive practical information, as well as discuss and debate concerns relevant to the teaching, researching and writing of Canadian history.

To join H-Canada, send the message sub H-Canada first name last name, affiliation, language preference to [listerv@msu.edu](mailto:listerv@msu.edu) which is the listserver for many of H-Net's discussion lists. Or you can fill in an electronic application form available at <http://www.usask.ca/history> which is the homepage for the history department at the University of Saskatchewan. For more information contact: Dave De Brou at [debrou@duke.usask.ca](mailto:debrou@duke.usask.ca) or Tony Gulig at [gulig@henson.cc.wvu.edu](mailto:gulig@henson.cc.wvu.edu) or visit H-Canada's web site at <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~canada>.

### **University of Saskatchewan Department of History Assistant Professor**

The Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan invites applications for a tenure-track position in 18th/19th Century Continental European History, beginning July 1, 1997 at the assistant professor level. Ph.D. and publications are strongly preferred. Evidence of good teaching is particularly invited.

Applicants should submit a letter of application, CV, and any other supporting material. They should also arrange to have three confidential letters of reference sent directly to Bill Waiser, Head, Department of History, 9 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 5A5 (Fax 306-966-5852; E-mail - [hist.dept@usask.ca](mailto:hist.dept@usask.ca)).

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the principles of Employment Equity and welcomes applications from all qualified candidates. Women, people of aboriginal descent, members of visible minorities, and people with disabilities are invited to identify themselves as members of these designated groups on their applications. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Application deadline is November 30, 1996.

### **CONGRESS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES, 1997**

In an effort to reduce waste - both financial and environmental - the Learned Societies Secretariat will not distribute registration booklets. Delegates must request a registration booklet from the Secretariat.

As well, delegates are advised to plan early. Transportation to, and accommodation in, St. John's will be tight as 1997 marks Newfoundland's Cabot 500 celebrations.

The CHA will be meeting from the 5th to the 8th of June.

Registration booklets can be requested from the Secretariat via e-mail ([learneds@morgan.ucs.mun.ca](mailto:learneds@morgan.ucs.mun.ca)), telephone (709) 737-4360 and fax (709) 737-4449.

Information on accommodations can be found on the Learned Societies web site: <http://www.mun.ca/learneds>.

### **CONGRÈS DES SOCIÉTÉS SAVANTES, 1997**

Afin d'éviter le gaspillage sur les plans financier et environnemental, le secrétariat des Sociétés savantes ne fera pas de distribution générale de la trousse d'inscription. Les délégués doivent en faire la demande au secrétariat.

De plus, nous recommandons aux délégués de prendre tôt leurs dispositions de transport et d'hébergement. La ville de St. John's sera achalandée, car 1997 marque le 500<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la visite de Cabot.

La Société historique tiendra ses réunions du 5 au 8 juin.

Vous pouvez demander votre trousse d'inscription par courrier électronique ([learneds@morgan.ucs.mun.ca](mailto:learneds@morgan.ucs.mun.ca)), par téléphone (709-737-4360) ou par télécopieur (709-737-4449).

Pour obtenir de l'information sur l'hébergement, consultez la page d'accueil des Sociétés savantes à l'adresse <http://www.mun.ca/learneds>.